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ABSTRACT

The admissions offices of 103 large, U.S. universities provided information regarding their admissions and retention of minority students for the eighth consecutive year. Results showed that black freshman enrollment was three percent in fall, 1969 and only five percent in fall, 1976, down from a high of six percent in 1973. Non-black minority freshman enrollment remained low and ranged from 0.2 percent American Indians to 1.7 percent minorities other than Hispanic or Asian Americans. The numbers of minority freshmen entering large universities seem to be either the same or decreasing. Most trends are holding steady, although the use of recommendations for general admission is down, the number of special programs for minorities is down sharply in public schools but steady in private schools, the average number of admissions criteria employed by each school is up, and the number of schools employing different admissions criteria for minorities has dropped in 1975 and 1976, all of which show trends back to 1969 levels. The very large decrease in black freshman enrollment in the Middle States region since 1973 could be important, since that region has been the trend setter in the past. It appears that private schools have not only done better than public schools in enrolling minority students, but they have done a better job of retaining them. (Author/JM)

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Summary

The admissions offices of 103 large, U.S. universities (93% return) were surveyed regarding their admissions and retention of minority students for the eighth consecutive year. Results showed that black freshman enrollment was 3% in fall, 1969 and only 5% in fall, 1976, down from a high of 6% in 1973. Non-black minority freshman enrollment remained low and ranged from 0.2% American Indians to 1.7% minorities other than Hispanic or Asian Americans.

A number of variables seem to indicate a stability or possible downturn in numbers of minority freshmen entering large universities. Most trends are holding steady, although the use of recommendations for general admission is down, the number of special programs for minorities is down sharply in public schools but steady in private schools, the average number of admissions criteria employed by each school is up, and the number of schools employing different admissions criteria for minorities has dropped in 1975 and 1976, all of which show trends back to 1969 levels. The very large decrease in black freshman enrollment in the Middle States region since 1973 (13% to 6%) could be important, since that region has been the trend setter in the past.

It appears that private schools have not only done better than public schools in enrolling minority students, but they have done a better job of retaining them. For instance, while public schools have been enrolling an average of 4 or 5% black freshmen in recent years, they report only 2.5% of their returning 1976 students are black. Private schools, however, have been enrolling about 6 or 7% black freshmen and returning 6.3% blacks. Additionally, private schools report 4% black transfer students, compared to 2.4% for public schools. This same general pattern follows for non-black minorities, although only two years of freshman data are available.

Suggestions to improve minority student retention are made and discussed.

The American College Personnel Association, through its Commission on Assessment for Student Development, has sponsored and partially funded a series of seven consecutive studies on minority admissions to large universities. The staff of the Cultural Study Center and the Counseling Center of the University of Maryland, College Park have conducted and reported these studies. The unique feature of these studies is that they have focused upon admissions criteria as well as the number of entering minority freshmen. In this way, policy and outcomes can be related. This is perhaps the biggest problem in education. There is often great publicity, attention, concern, etc. devoted to an educational issue only to have it fade or diminish before we bother to determine what, if anything, happened or changed.

Begun in 1969, this series of admissions studies has spanned times of changing perceptions of minority student admissions. Early in the series, recruiting and selecting minority, particularly black, students were the big issues. Great publicity, demonstrations, turmoil, special programs and money abounded. After a big initial splash, many schools felt their admissions task was largely over, and they turned to other issues and concerns. As enrollments of all students dropped or remained stable, money tightened and governmental pressure subsided, there was a retrenchment and reduction of programs and concern for minority admissions. Much recent attention in minority admissions has gone to concerns over reverse discrimination, lawsuits and student retention. The yearly survey has emphasized many of these issues in a given year beyond just providing the basic data.

Previous studies (Sedlacek & Brooks, 1970; Sedlacek, Brooks, & Horowitz, 1972; Sedlacek, Brooks, & Mindus, 1973; Sedlacek, Lewis, & Brooks, 1974; Sedlacek, Merritt, & Brooks, 1975; Sedlacek and Pelham, 1976a, b) have shown a number of trends. New black freshman enrollment rose slowly but steadily from 3% in 1969 to 6% in 1973, but then dropped to 5% in 1974 and 1975. The Middle States and Western area schools made the greatest gains from 1969 to 1975 (Middle States, 6% to 13%; Western, 5% to 9%) but also made the largest drop in 1974 and 1975 (Middle States to 9%; Western to 5%). The Southern region has made the most steady gains in black freshman enrollment, and was second only to the Middle States region in 1975 in percent of black freshman enrollment (6%). Geographical areas are based on regional accrediting associations reported in the higher education directory of the U.S. Office of Education (1975).

Private schools have generally enrolled a greater percentage of black students over the years. The schools most successful in enrolling blacks have tended to emphasize academic programs (special or general), while the least successful schools have tended to emphasize money in recruiting black students. Additionally, schools that were able to streamline red tape and admit black students on the spot were more successful in enrolling blacks.

In 1975, non-black minority enrollments of new freshmen were: Hispanic Americans, 1.3%; "other" minorities, 1.3%; Asian Americans, 0.8%, and American Indians, 0.3%. Western schools had the highest percentages of non-black minorities (6% Asian Americans; 5% Hispanic Americans). While 24% of the schools reported some impact of tighter budgets in minority admissions programs in 1975, this compares to 40% in 1974.

There are a number of trends to suggest the strong possibility that we may have reached a plateau, or could have a decrease in minority admissions in future years. The number of special programs is down, as is the number of schools employing different criteria for minority students. The use of recommendations has not changed, and despite considerable evidence as to problems in selecting black students with traditional admissions criteria (e.g., Pfeifer & Sedlacek, 1974; Sedlacek, 1974 ; Sedlacek & Brooks, 1976), most schools continue to employ grades and standardized tests.

The present study was designed to resurvey the large, predominantly white, universities in the United States to continue to monitor the trends and questions noted above. Particular emphasis was placed on admissions of non-black minorities and retention of minority students.

Method and Results

The admissions offices of 110 universities were sent a questionnaire concerning their minority admissions policies. The institutions sampled were large. primarily white, schools throughout the United States. Schools in the major athletic conferences and large, independent institutions were included in the sample. If an individual state (including the District of Columbia) was not represented by the sampling method used, the largest school in the state was included. The questionnaires were mailed out in November, 1976, and telephone follow-up procedures resulted in a total return of 103 questionnaires (94%). Of the 103 schools reporting, 85 (83%) were public, and 18 (17%) were private.

1. *What is your approximate undergraduate enrollment? About how many new freshmen matriculated this fall? About how many new undergraduate transfer students matricualted this fall?*

Table 1 shows the range of enrollment, total enrollment, and freshman and transfer student enrollment by six geographical regions for schools in the sample. The median total enrollment was 13,936, while median freshman enrollment was 2,561, and median transfer enrollment was 1,196.

Enrollments for 1976 were close to those of 1975, with median total enrollment somewhat larger and median freshman enrollment somewhat smaller.

2. What is the approximate percentage of students enrolled for each racial/ethnic group?

Table 2 shows the median percent of black freshman enrollment by region. The overall percent of black freshmen remained at 5%, where it has been since 1974, and which was first achieved in 1972. The Middle States region showed a large drop and is now at 6%, which is where it started in 1969. The Western region increased to 7%, from 5% in 1975, although the small number of schools in this region makes yearly fluctuation more expected. The North Centeral region dropped from 5% to 3%, which is where that region started in 1969. The fact that the overall percent remained at 5%,while most regions actually reported lower percentages is due to rounding. The overall median was 4.67%, and regional fluctuations are less stable than tne overall percentages.

In data not tabled, private schools indicated a higher median percent of new black freshman enrollment than public schools in 1976: (6% vs. 4%). This differential has been: 1975- private 7%, public 4%; 1974 - private 5%, public 4.5%; 1973 - private 6%, public 7%; 1972 - private 6%, public 5%; 1971 and 1970, private 6%, public 4%. Data were not reported for 1969. Thus, private schools have enrolled

a greater percentage of new black freshmen than public schools over the years of this survey.

Table 3 shows the median percent of non-black minority freshman enrollment by region for 1975 and 1976. The Western region remains the region enrolling the most non-black minority freshmen, particularly Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans. The Middle States region enrolls the most "other" minorities. Overall, non-black enrollments are similar for 1975 and 1976. Percentages are reported to one decimal place, but readers are cautioned against over-interpreting percentage differences based on small numbers.

Percentages of non-black minority freshman enrollment for public and private schools in 1976 were: Hispanic Americans - public 0.9%, private 1.7%; American Indians - public 0.2%, private 0.04%; Asian Americans - public 0.5%, private 1.9%; other minority - public 1.5%, private 2.5%. Thus, private schools tended to enroll a greater percentage of non-black minority freshmen than did public schools.

Table 4 shows the median percent of returning and transfer students for all minority student groups by type of institution. The purpose of requesting these data was to achieve an overview of the minority admissions-retention process. The categories are mutually exclusive. In the fall of 1976, a matriculated undergraduate student was either a new freshman, a transfer student, or a returning student. Forty-one (40%) schools provided data on minority transfer students, and 56 (54%) schools provided data on minority returning students. Overall percentages of returning and transfer students were very close to one another , and in turn, closely paralleled the freshman percentages for each group except blacks. Blacks were 2.4% of transfer students and 3.1% of returning students, compared to 5% of freshmen.

Table 4 also shows that private schools have consistently enrolled a higher percentage of minority transfer and returning students for all minority groups except American Indian, where they were equal to the public schools. However, because of the relatively smaller number of schools reporting , the sample may be biased, although about the same relative percent of public and private schools responded as were in the total sample.

3. Briefly describe your regular admissions criteria for new freshmen.

High school rank (HSR) (60%), high school grade point average (HSGPA) (62%), and standardized tests (Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) (62%) and American College Test (ACT) (52%) remained as the most common admissions criteria employed by schools. Other regular admissions criteria were CEEB achievement tests (10%), extracurricular activities (5%), interviews (2%) and predicted GPA (2%). Eight percent had open admissions (defined as requiring only a high school diploma or its equivalent for entry),which compares to 13% in 1975, 8% in 1974, 16% in 1973 and 1972, 12% in 1971 and 1970, and 10% in 1969.

The mean number of admissions criteria employed by all schools was 2.77 in 1976, 2.48 in 1975, 2.29 in 1974, 2.90 in 1973, 2.77 in 1972, 3.17 in 1971, 3.32 in 1970, and 2.05 in 1969. Thus, after a tendency toward using fewer admissions criteria, schools have employed increasingly more criteria in 1975 and 1976. The use of recommendations dropped to 14% in 1976 and continued the trend toward less use in recent years: 19% in 1975 and 1974; 28% in 1973; 29% in 1972; 33% in 1971; 34% in 1970; and 13% in 1969.

Additionally, 68% of the schools reported using either HSGPA or

or HSR combined with SAT or ACT scores in 1976. This compares to 73% in 1975, 61% in 1974, 86% in 1973, 82% in 1972, 80% in 1971, 82% in 1970, and 99% in 1969.

4. Do you have special programs in which minorities, or mostly minorities are enrolled? If yes, briefly describe the criteria for admission to the program(s).

Thirty-eight percent of the schools had special programs in which mostly blacks were enrolled. This compares to 55% in 1975, 62% in 1974, 50% in 1973, 54% in 1972, 60% in 1971, 52% in 1970, and 48% in 1969. Fourteen percent had programs for local residents only, compared to 15% in 1975, 16% in 1974, 24% in 1973, 28% in 1972, 14% in 1971, and 20% in 1970. Compared to regular admissions criteria, relatively more weight was given to HSGPA, HSR and recommendations, and less weight to standardized tests for special programs. While this follows the general pattern of previous years, the use of recommendations among schools with special programs remained low: 10% in 1976, compared to 8% in 1975, 7% in 1974, 24% in 1973, 43% in 1972, 23% in 1971, 38% in 1970, and 43% in 1969.

Additionally, there continued to be little emphasis on HSGPA, SAT and ACT in admitting blacks to special programs in 1976. HSGPA was used by 12% of the schools with special programs in 1976, compared to 7% in 1975, 9% in 1974, 20% in 1973, 36% in 1972, 26% in 1971, 46% in 1970, and 55% in 1969. SAT was used by 7% in 1976 and 1975, 3% in 1974, 13% in 1973, 26% in 1972, 18% in 1971, 39% in 1970, and 57% in 1969. ACT was used by 7% in 1976, 3% in 1975, 4% in 1974, 9% in 1973, 12% in 1972, 9% in 1971, 5% in 1970 and 10% in 1969. An additional 4% of all schools reported having special programs in which primarily non-black minorities were enrolled, making a total of

42% of the schools with some special programs in which mostly minority students were enrolled.

5. *Aside from special programs, are blacks admitted under the same criteria as are all regular new freshmen? If no, briefly describe how the criteria differ.*

Thirteen percent of the 103 schools used different regular admissions criteria for blacks in 1976, compared to 9% in 1975, 13% in 1974, 14% in 1973, 26% in 1972, 20% in 1971, 36% in 1970, and 45% in 1969. "Different criteria of admission" was generally interpreted by admissions officers as referring to different applications or cutoff points of the same variables used in regular admissions. Private schools tended to use different admissions criteria more than public schools in 1976 (20% vs. 11%), compared to similar differentials in past years: (20% vs. 7% in 1975; 35% vs. 8% in 1974; 17% vs. 11% in 1973; 50% vs. 20% in 1972; 52% vs. 20% in 1971; and 75% vs.26% in 1970) the higher percentage being private in all cases.

Additionally, 39% of the public schools and 55% of the private schools had special programs for blacks in 1976, compared to: both 55% in 1975; public 65%, private 50% in 1974; public 50%, private 50% in 1973; public 53%, private 55% in 1972; public 58%, private 67% in 1971; and public 54%, private 45% in 1970.

Discussion

Black freshman enrollment in large universities was 3% in fall, 1969 and was only 5% in fall, 1976, which is the level reached in 1972. The largest percentage of black freshman enrollment was 6% in fall, 1973. The enrollment of non-black minority group freshmen was about the same in fall, 1976 as it was in fall, 1975; and ranged

from 0.2% American Indians to 1.7% minorities other than Hispanic or Asian American. The American Council on Education (ACE) (Astin, King, & Richardson, 1976) estimate a 6.9% black freshman enrollment which is up from 5.4% in 1975 and 3.4% in 1974. It should be noted that the ACE data represent black freshmen in all universities, and are based on a weighted sampling procedure rather than a census of nearly the entire population of large universities, as is employed in this study. Thus differences between the ACE data and the present study could be due to many variables, but if there has been an increase in black freshmen, it does not appear to be in the large universities. The ACE figures on non-black minorities are 0.7% Hispanic Americans and American Indians ,1.4% Asian Americans, and 1.2% other minorities. The largest discrepancies from data in the current study are ACE reporting more American Indians and Asian Americans. The higher Asian American estimate was also present in 1975 data, and again, may be due to differences in the populations studied.

A number of variables seem to indicate a stability or possible downturn in numbers of minority freshmen entering large universities. Most trends are holding steady, although the use of recommendations for general admission is down, the number of special programs for minorities is down sharply in public schools but steady in private schools, the average number of admissions criteria employed by each school is up, and the number of schools employing different admission criteria for minorities has dropped in 1975 and 1976, all of which show trends back to 1969 levels. The very large decrease in black freshman enrollment in the Middle States region since 1973 (13% to 6%) could be important since that region has been the trend setter in

the past.

The decrease in special programs is likely linked to tighter state and federal budgets, which were cited by schools as problems in 1974 and 1975 (Sedlacek and Pelham, 1976a, b). However, as noted earlier, schools emphasizing money in recruiting black students have done the poorest in increasing minority enrollment, while those emphasizing programs and streamlined admissions procedures have done the best (Sedlacek, Merritt & Brooks, 1975).

It appears that private schools have not only done better than public schools in enrolling minority students, but they have done a better job of retaining them (Table 4). For instance, while public schools have been enrolling an average of 4 or 5% black freshmen in recent years, they report only 2.5% of their returning 1976 students are black. Private schools, however, have been enrolling about 6 or 7% black freshmen and returning 6.3% blacks. Additionally, private schools report 4% black transfer students, compared to 2.4% for public schools. This same general pattern follows for non-black minorities, although only two years of freshman data are available (Table 3).

The concern over minority student retention has increased in recent years and there is growing evidence that nonacademic and noncognitive variables may play a more critical role than grades and test scores. For instance, Astin (1975) found that black students were more likely to leave school for financial reasons or marriage than white students. He also found that blacks who were able to demonstrate knowledge gained in nontraditional ways through credit-by-examination were less likely to drop out than blacks who did not take credit-by-examination. The increase in student retention

associated with demonstrating knowledge in this nontraditional way was more than twice as great for blacks as for whites.

Sedlacek and Brooks (1976), in reviewing nontraditional or non-cognitive predictor studies useful in predicting minority student success or diagnosing potential problem areas, concluded that there were seven key non-cognitive variables: (1) Positive self concept. Confidence, strong "self" feeling, strength of character, determination, independence. (2) Understands and deals with racism. Realist, based on personal experience of racism. Committed to fighting to improve existing system. Not submissive to existing wrongs, nor hateful of society, or a "copout." Able to handle racist system. Asserts that the school has a role in fighting racism. (3) Realistic self-appraisal. Recognizes and accepts any academic or background deficiencies and works hard at self-development. (4) Prefers long-range goals to short-term or immediate needs. Understands and is willing to accept deferred gratification. (5) Availability of a strong support person. Has a person of strong influence available to provide advice. (6) Successful leadership experience. Has shown the ability to organize and influence others within one's cultural/racial contexts. (7) Demonstrated community service. Has shown evidence of contribution to his or her community.

All of the above variables can be assessed by practical means through interviews, counseling sessions, standardized measures, questionnaires, or application forms, and can be obtained by counselors and personnel workers. Thus, the process of gathering such information should be able to fit into existing programs without involving significant costs. Many administrators and educators are concerned with the implications of any minority admissions policies for possible

"reverse discrimination" lawsuits. The use of the above noncognitive variables has been recommended by the Association of American Medical Colleges as a way to achieve equality and be prepared for possible lawsuits (D'Costa et al., 1974; Association of American Medical Colleges, 1976). The basis of most reverse discrimination lawsuits has been a white applicant accusing a school of preferential admission based on race or ethnic group. If a school were to employ a systematic minority admissions procedure based on empirical studies which showed the procedure to be valid, it would be in a good position to avoid lawsuits.

It should be noted that it is not being suggested that the seven noncognitive variables are not important for white applicants. It is suggested that the way we go about gathering our admissions information favors white applicants, and we tend to get noncognitive information routinely for them. Tests and application forms tend to tap the lifestyles and culture of middle class whites more than any other group. For instance, a minority applicant who has shown leadership in a community project rather than the biology club might not be as likely to write it on the application, because of the way the question is worded and his or her lack of information on what is appropriate to write in.

We are saying that in admissions and retention, we are after equality of information to use in making decisions and planning programs. If we must work harder, or use different methods to secure information from some applicants, so be it: our goal is equality of outcome.

While this study may have raised more questions than it answered, it does appear that continued research, local and national, on this

topic would be useful. In particular, a study of the reasons for the relative success of private schools is appropriate.

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Table 1.

Range and Frequency of Enrollments for 103 Schools by Geographical Location

Schools by Region	N	Range of Total Enroll.	Median Total Enroll.	Median Fresh. Enroll.	Median Transfer Student Enroll.
North Central	34	3,378-54,000	17,007	3,090	1,385
Southern	27	2,600-45,000	14,750	2,520	1,201
Middle States	19	2,000-42,741	9,692	1,787	850
Northwest	12	2,343-26,560	8,314	2,182	1,013
New England	6	7,500-18,300	8,610	2,108	502
Western	5	6,[illegible]00-20,487	16,000	3,000	2,143
Totals	103	2,000-54,000	13,936	2,561	1,196

Table 2.

Median Percent of Black Freshman Enrollment by Region, 1969-1976

Region	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
North Central	3	3	3	5	5	4	5	3
Southern	2	3	3	4	5	5	6	5
Middle States	6	8	8	13	13	9	9	6
Northwest	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
New England	1	2	2.5	2	3	2	2	2
Western	5	8	6	4	9	4	5	7
Median Totals	3%	4%	4%	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%

Table 3.

Median Percent of Non-Black Minority Freshman Enrollment by Region, 1975-1976

Region	Hispanic American		American Indian		Asian American		Other Minority	
	1975	1976	1975	1976	1975	1976	1975	1976
North Central	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.9	0.7	1.0	1.4
Southern	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.2	0.5	1.3
Middle States	1.8	1.7	0.1	0.4	0.7	1.1	3.0	8.0
Northwest	1.8	0.4	1.1	1.3	1.7	1.3	2.0	1.3
New England	0.3	0.5	none	none	0.5	0.1	none	none
Western	5.0	6.9	0.2	0.3	6.0	14.0	none	3.6
Median Totals	1.3	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.6	1.3	1.7

Table 4.

Median Percent of Transfer and Returning Minority Students by Type of Institution, 1976

	N	Hispanic American	American Indian	Asian American	Black American	Other Minority
Transfer-Total	41	0.6	0.2	0.6	2.4	1.8
Public	34	0.5	0.2	0.5	2.4	1.7
Private	7	2.0	0.2	1.3	4.0	3.0
Returning-Total	56	0.7	0.2	0.5	3.1	1.8
Public	45	0.5	0.2	0.4	2.5	1.7
Private	11	1.4	0.2	2.1	6.3	4.0